

# Epistle to Friends

Concerning

PRESENT and SUCCEEDING  
TIMES.



giving a Faithful Exhortation and Warning  
to all Friends, who profess the Truth, to beware  
of the manifold Wiles of the Enemy, and to stand  
firm in the Light of the Lord God of Heaven  
and Earth, against his Assaults, that so they may  
be ready to answer the Call and Requirings of the  
Lord.

Something signified of the Misery of the Succe-  
ding Times, that all may be prepared, and that the Evil Day  
may not overtake any at unawares, but such as turn away their  
ear from Counsel.

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*One who is a Traveller in the way of Peace, and hath  
good will towards all Men, and more especially to the  
Household of Faith,*

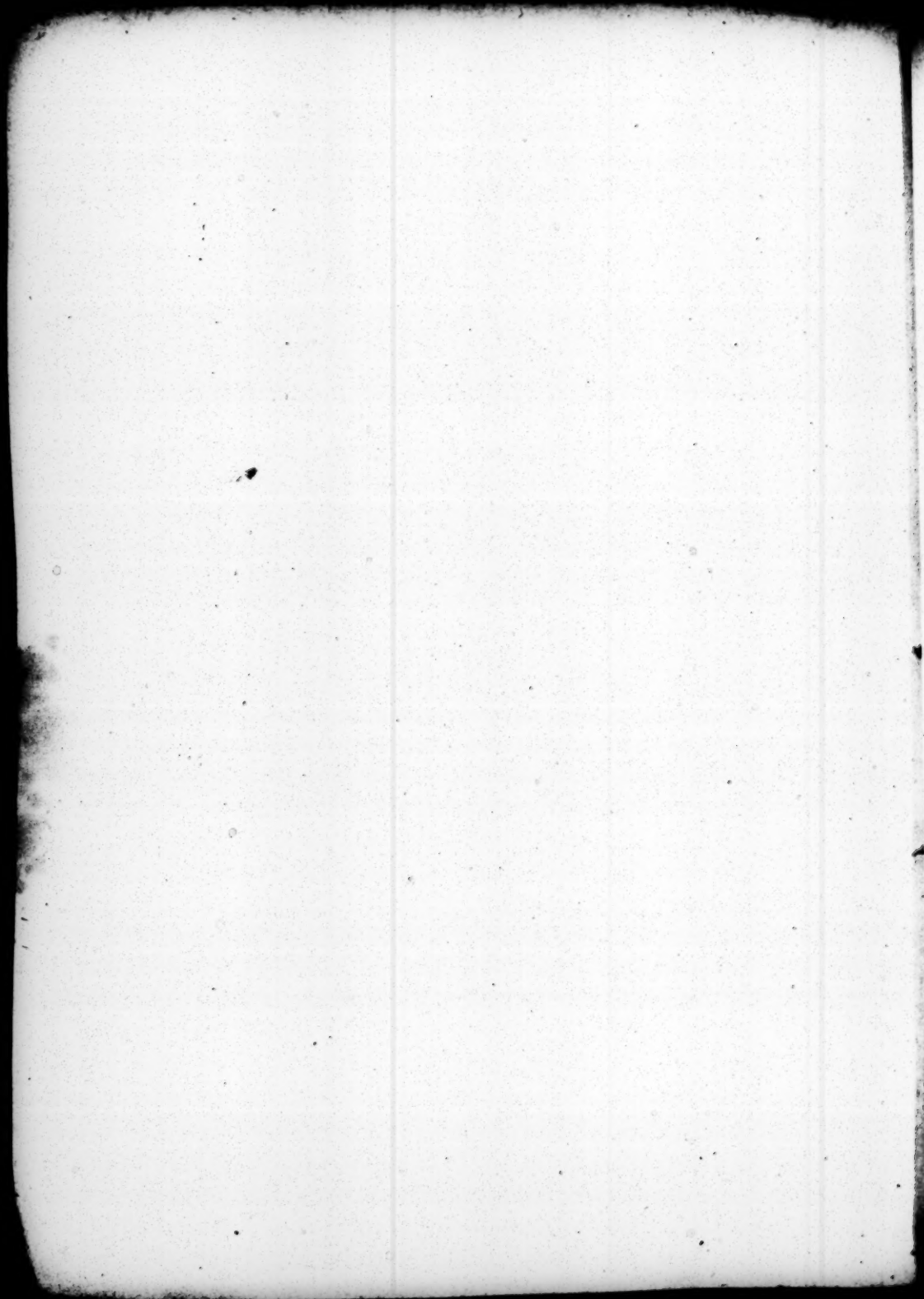
STEPHEN CRISP.

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*him that hath an Ear, hear what the Spirit saith to the  
Churches.*

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Printed in the Year 1666. and Reprinted for further  
Service in the Year 1679.



## FRIEND;

**W**Hosoever thou art, that art travelling towards *Sion*, who art hungry and thirsting after Righteousness, who art waiting upon the Lord for Strength to follow him fully, who art careful for nothing but to grow up unto the Lord in all Well-pleasings, and in Faithfulness to stand approved to the Lord, over the Spirit of the World, and all that is in it; thou who art daily crying. *Wash me, O Lord; wash me thorowly, search me and try me, and let no Evil Way, no Thought, no Word, no Work remain that may offend thee, or grieve thy Holy Spirit, but by the Power thereof subdue, bring down, cast out all that is not of thy begetting: Yea, Lord, saith the Upright in Heart. Spare no Arrows, sit thou as Refiners Fire, thorowly purge the Flower, burn up the Chaff and all Combustible Matter, remove all that can be shaken, that nothing may remain but that which can stand all Storms, that which cannot be moved, that which will hold out to the End, and in the End praise the God of Endless Mercies.*

'Tis for thee for whose sake this ensuing Treatise is again Re printed, and I question not but thou wilt find and feel in it the Savour of Life, in which it was at first given forth; and its Service still remains to thy Comfort and Encouragement.

Oh Friend! 'tis to him who through many Tribulations overcometh the World, and all things therein, that the promised Inheritance must be given; he

who is fitted and prepared must possess the Inheritance with the Saints in Light.

'Tis he that overcometh that shall eat the Fruit of the Tree of Life, that is in the midst of the Paradise of God. 'Tis he or those who are of the Seed of *Jacob*, that are wrestling with the Lord till the Break of the Day, that have the New Name that none can know but he that hath it, over whom the second Death can have no power.

'Tis He who shall not be hurt by the Breaking and Confusion of Nations, but he shall have Power over it all; his Name shall not be blotted out of the Book of Life, who hath born a faithful Testimony for the Lord in his Day and Generation to the end, him will the Lord Jesus confess before his Father, and he shall be a Pillar in God's House, yea, he shall go no more forth: And though he hath formerly been as a Prodigal, who hath spent his Portion, yet cannot be satisfied with Husks, but is constrained to return in the Sense of his Poverty, being willing to be a Servant in his Father's House, or any thing that the Lord will have him to be. 'Tis for him the fatted Calf is slain. 'Tis he on whom the best Robe, the Wedding Garment must be put on, and he must sit at the Table of the Lord, and eat of the Feast of fat things, that is prepared upon the Mountain of Holiness; 'tis he must drink the new Wine in the Kingdom of God; yea, such may drink abundantly to their Souls Refreshment; and these, as they have their Dependence upon the Lord, shall be made faithful unto Death, even the Death of every thing that is exalted above God's pure Witness, the Death of every thing



thing that is contrary to God's pure holy Spirit in themselves; these in this trying Day know not what thing the Lord will have for a Sacrifice, and are therefore given up to him in Body, Soul and Spirit, with whole Substance, even all they are and have, that God may be glorified in all, well knowing we are not our own.

'Tis for these, this little Flock, to whom in the good Pleasure of the Father a Kingdom must be given; these who have put off the Old Man and his Deeds, who have received the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in him; these who have seen the Emptiness, yea, Nothingness of all things below, who have their Conversation in Heaven, and are ready to follow the Lord wheresoever he goeth; these are they who shall rest in quiet, who shall witness that Peace that passeth Understanding, when the World with all its Glory and Riches shall be hurled hither and thither; these shall rejoyce in, and have Unity with that Power that Overturneth, Overturneth; and when Hypocrites shall be surprized, and the Sinners in *Sion* shall be afraid, these shall stand fast in God, although as it were upon a Sea of Glass mingled with Fire; and the Lord God Omnipotent will put a new Song into their Mouthes, when they that know not the Lord, nor the Operation of his Power, shall have Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth; these who have overcome the Worldly Spirit in themselves, and knowing him ruling in them, who rules the Nations with an Iron Rod; these having the Moon under their Feet, shall be clothed with the Sun; these having Oyl in their Vessels,

sels, as well as in their Lamps : these shall enter into the Chamber, where they shall be hid till the Calamity be over-past; these shall rest in Peace under his Banner, that is Meek and Lowly, yet riding on in the Greatness of his Strength, conquering and to conquer, under whose Government there is and will be Peace and Plenty, whilst Distress, Want, Anguish and Perplexity shall over-take all the Workers of Iniquity.

Now, to this God, that is able to do more abundantly for them that fear his Name and trust in his Mercy, than we can ask or think, be all holy praises and Obedience, Might, Majesty and Dominion forever and ever, faith my Soul.

The 28th of the 4th  
Moneth, 1679.

*M. F.*

# AN Epistle to Friends

Concerning  
The PRESENT and SUCCEEDING  
TIMES.

*Dear Friends,*

**Y**OU whom the Lord hath reached unto in this the day of his Love, and hath made known the Way of Truth and Righteousness unto you, through the raising up of that holy living Witness of himself, that long lay hid and buried in you, and hath brought you to a secret feeling of something in you, that is worth the minding and regarding; and the Lord causing this to appear in the day of your seeking, as a Light, discovering Darkness, and its Power, by which ye were formerly holden, and given you by his Spirit a sense and secret Hope, that in this Light, the way of Deliverance was to be attained unto; this Hope made you not ashamed of the Light which before you hated, but you came to know and embrace it, even while others still hated it, and you for its sake; yet your Hearts being affected with the hope that did appear therein, could not but joy unto it, as to make publick Profession of it for its own sake; and for no other ends or designs, or interest at all, but with resolution in that Light, to wait for the Salvation of God. Dear Friends, it is you aforementioned,

mentioned that both now, and for some Dayes and Weeks my Heart hath been deeply exercised concerning, even Night and Day; and the aboundings of the Fathers Love doth often overcome me, and draws me forth now to say and write these things unto you for your Admonition and Establishment; and indeed it is you who did thus rightly own the Way of Truth, and knew your believing to be the Gift and Mercy of God to your Souls, that I do aim at; for those that have taken up the profession of the precious Truth upon by respects and sinister ends, and but for Reason propounded in their Carnal minds; though I do pity them, yet I have not much at this time to say to them, but this, *The Day shall declare them, and their Garments shall not hide them*

But you, Oh my Friends, who had fellowship with us, in the deep travels of our beginnings, and did come to Truth the same way, and have known the power and vertue of it, many times overcoming you in your inward man, which hath made you cry out, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread*; and hath made you as a walled Garden: Oh Friends, how shall I express or signifie unto you those Longings, those ardent Desires and earnest Breathings of my Soul, that you, even you, might abide to the end of all Tryals, and Tribulations, and Adversities, and might inherit that Crown of Immortality, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and might not by any means be bereft thereof; this is singly my travel in Body and Spirit, that you might be kept and preserved out of all the subtil Snares of the wicked one, which hunts for the Soul, even of those that have believed; And therefore in dear and tender love, I have a few things to write unto you for the clearing of my Conscience, and discharging my duty in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord give you all a tender and an understanding Heart, that both you and I may yet have cause daily to praise the Lord in the glorious Light of his Salvation, which he hath manifested amongst us, by the revealing I is Son Jesus Christ, to whom belongs *Dominion, Honour and Glory forever, Amen.*

And



And first, dear Friends, it is in my Heart to put you in remembrance of that by which we were called & convinced, which as a Foundation Principle was laid in and among you, and it being unchangeable and unalterable in itself, doth therefore admit of no alteration or change in those that are rightly kept to it.

It was a Light which arose in our Hearts, and shined forth from God, the Father of Lights, carrying in its appearance the Nature and Property of God, both in its condemning Evil, which the Enemy had sown or planted in us; and owning, approving, and justifying every thing that was good and honest, just and equal; even those Thoughts in our Hearts which were of turning towards the Lord, and seeking his Righteousness; these thoughts were justified and encouraged by the Light, and all the contrary discovered and judged, as they were brought to it to be tried. Now this Light did our Souls rejoyce in, as they had good cause, though it took away our former Rejoycings; our Pleasures in Vanities and Iniquity died, our Glory in this World withered, our Friendship with the Sons of men decayed, and we stood in the Light and saw all these things, and were not sorry at it, but waited daily to see these things more and more brought to pass; neither was there a permitting our Thoughts to go out, how we might prevent those Damages, or repair these Losses, but the Cross of Christ was indeed our glorifying or rejoycing; and the Hope that was before us, did make us despise the Pleasures, Treasures and Honours, Friendship and Delights of this World; and in those dayes you grew into a feeling of the Heavenly Joy, where the Hundred-fold was witnessed in your Bosoms, and the Zeal of the Lord was kindled by his own Spirit in you, against whatsoever this Light of Jesus in the Conscience did witness against; and the Lord beheld your Integrity, and blessed you, and multiplyed you, and added to your strength and stature and then did the Fruits of this glorious Work abound among you, in three more general and special effects; by which effects, or by their continuance among you, let all now come to search and try themselves, that so, dear Friends, those that have continued faithful in them all, may



persevere in like manner to the end : and those, who upon true search do find, that they have failed, and fallen short in all or any of them, may make haste to Repent, and to turn to that which was the Root of them all, that they may not be found as fruitless and withered Branches, in the day that cometh, lest they be cut off, and utterly consumed, and blotted out from among the living Branches of the Vine ; for a Day cometh that Truth will look into the Fig-Tree for Fruit, and Leaves will not defend it from the Curse and Blasting.

The three especial Fruits that did spring forth from this blessed Root, and were and are to continue, and increase in us and amongst us to the end, are these ;

1. *Purity*, manifested in a Godly Conversation.
2. *Unity*, manifested in dear and tender Love one towards another.
3. *Faithfulness*, manifested in bearing a constant and faithful Testimony to the things we had received and believed, though it were unto great loss and sufferings.

And against all these doth the wicked one appear, to see if he can make you barren concerning them, and that with divers Wiles and Subtilties, that he may prevail on you, and not be known to be the Enemy, but might so overcome you, as that you might both submit to him, and then plead for him and his Snares and Wiles, as being just, right, lawful, prudent, convenient, &c. But, Oh dear Friends, let all be watchful and diligent to wait in the sense and true feeling of that Seed that never fell nor was beguiled ; and you will (even the least of you) see and comprehend his workings and transformings, and be delivered from them.

1. *Purity and Holiness* was a Fruit in you, which doth yet flourish in many (*blessed be the Lord*) who are as watchful and careful to approve themselves in obedience to the Light of Truth in their inward parts, as ever, and find as great a necessity both of trying and judging with its Judgment as ever ; these having thus waited, have renewed their strength unto this very day, and do mount up as upon the Wings of an Eagle ; these are neither weary in running, nor faint they in their walking ;

ing; But alas, Friends, even these do know with how great and manifold assaults they have been assaulted, and know and see with sorrow of Heart how the assault hath prevailed upon some, by working into the mind a secret Liberty, and supposed enlargedness, whereby a Carelessness hath entered some, and they having no Keeper, but the measure of Light revealed in their Hearts and Consciences, so soon as they came to be perswaded to slight the Reproofs of that, they soon erred; and this supposed Liberty entered, *that now, after so many Years strictness and circumspection, they should not need now to stand so straitly to try things and words as at first, because now a day of more Liberty was come*; and this Liberty secretly prevailed against that pure fear that once was placed in their Hearts, and against the very obedience of Truth, inwardly in the subjection of the mind, and then it became manifest outwardly; the Actions sometimes blame-worthy, the Words and Speech again corrupted, and run into the old Channel of the World, like them again, and the single pure Language, learned in the Light, in the time of their poverty and simplicity, almost lost and forgotten, and so the work of God which he wrought, in a manner laid waste; and then, when this Liberty is entered, and made use of as aforesaid, oftentimes a secret subtilty ariseth against the judgment of Truth, either from within, or from any outwardly, that are grieved with this loose and careless kind of speaking or acting, which subtilly leads to contend for it, or against the Judgment, telling the Creature, *why these things are but small things, and little things, and what, we must not strain at a Gnat, and such like*. Oh my Friends, beware of these evil Suggestions of the wicked one: How came they to be small and little things, seeing they were great things with us in the beginning? And how comes an offence of this Nature to be light now, seeing it was heavy in the beginning? Oh let not the greatest Mercies of our God so fill us, as to make us slight or forget the least obedience, but rather let the continuance of his Mercy the more quicken you up unto a Zeal for his Name and Truth in all things, to be found doing and speaking according to the Rule of Righteousness, which ye learned in the Light, in the day of

your being low and little, and then nothing will rise up and be exalted in the multitude of Gods Mercies, but that holy Birth which lives in Purity when it is at highest; and so that Life of Righteousness will shine forth more and more, which glorifies God and seeks his honour. Dear Friends, that ye might be so kept unto the end, is the breathing and travel of my Soul: and that where this neglect hath entered, and this aforelaid Corruption either in Speech or Action is to be found, that ye would receive the Word of Exhortation in meekness and fear, in which it is written unto you, and may redeem the time, for the dayes are and shall be evil, and none will hold the mystery of the Faith (that saves from falling in the evil day) but such as do keep the pure and undefiled Conscience, which none can do but by persisting and continuing in the daily Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief and obedience of the Truth.

A second Fruit that was brought forth from this good Root, was *Unity* and *Love* one towards another; which, blessed be the Lord, is preciouslly preserved in and among many to this very day; who are so sensible of the divers operations of Truth in them, to be all by one Spirit, that they are still kept of one heart and mind, given up freely to serve the Lord in singleness of heart in their Generation; and are in this good work as Strengtheners and Encouragers of one another; but notwithstanding the Enemy hath been exceeding busie to lay waste and destroy this blessed effect also, and that under divers Pretences, which the Lord still discovered by his own Light and Spirit in his People, who have singlly waited upon him; but many have been his Wiles, sometimes fitting and preparing Vessels to rise up in the fleshly and sensual Wisdom, and to traduce and bring in corrupt and evil Doctrines, to try who were not found in the Faith, that they may draw them aside into a heat and zeal for something which had not its Root in the Truth, and which they that abode in the Truth could not own, but judge and condemn in the Name of the Lord; which when such saw, they took thereat occasion of striving to propagate and promote that which they saw withstood; so having lost subjection to the Spirit of Truth in themselves, which would have kept them in  
 Unity

Unity in the Body; and having also lost and laid by their subjection to them that were over them in the Lord, they then grew stubborn and wilful, and proceeded in more zeal for that which stood in opposition to the Truth; then ever they did for the Truth it self; and these sometimes have prevailed to the subverting whole Households, and have turned several from the Faith and simplicity that is in the Gospel, who, as well as those that subverted them, have lost the fellowship of the Saints, and the favour of Life either in themselves or others, and then the Enemy periwaded them, all are dead to the Life but themselves; and so they grow to have a tickling Joy in what they do and say, in obedience to that perverse and singular private Spirit, and so grow up to speak evil of Dignities, and are unruly, and dare to speak against Heaven, and them that dwell and inhabit in it, whom God makes to shine as Stars in the Firmament of his Power; but alas for them, my Soul pities them, when I see how they sport themselves with their own deceivings; but the Day of the Lord is among his People, which hath and doth make them and thier Spirit manifest, and their Fruits also have made them manifest.

Another Way that the Enemy seeks to break the Unity, and dissolve the Bond of Amity, is, by sowing a Seed of Jealousie and Prejudice in the Hearts of such in whom he can get an Entrance, that so they may cease from the true and unfeigned Love, and that upon a pretended Reason, because of this or that, which is supposed or imagined, in the evil part in themselves against others; giving heed to evil Thoughts, and Surmises, which break forth many times in Whisperings and Tale-bearing; which though the thing supposed to be evil, were really so, yet this is not to be allowed or given way to among you, but to use plainness one towards another, and singleheartedness; and to shut out the Evil One in this his subtil appearance also. Oh dear Friends! remember how the Lord hath dealt with you, and de Lyou so one by another; he hath not sought Occasions against you, but hath long born and suffered, and exercised much Patience and Tenderness towards you; yet plainly reproving the Evil in you, and not treasuring it up against you. Oh Friends!



Friends ! be like-minded one towards another, that the Enemy of your Peace and Concord may be defeated, and you preserved entire to one Head, even to Christ Jesus; and ye may be one, and the Name of the Lord may be one among you; and that which tends to the making cold your Love, may be judged in all; and so Brotherly Love will continue with you to the End.

Another way which the Enemy works to scatter, and to bring from this Unity, is, by leading some who have believed, into some Sin and Iniquity, which the Body (that are in the Truth) are constrained to appear in Judgment against for the Truth's sake; and yet notwithstanding the Party so sinning, being above the Witness in themselves, which would bring them to own the Judgment of the Spirit of Christ in his Church, they exalt themselves above the Judgment, and seek to gain to them such whom they can enter by their words and Complaints, to take part with them against the Judgment, and those that passed it. Such were those whose words *did eat* (the Apostle saith) *as a Canker*; of whom the Believers in those days were to be aware: for commonly such as have gone from the Power that should have kept them clean and upright, they will also turn against the Power in those that abide in it, especially if they be drawn forth to reprove and rebuke them: but let all such know, that's not the way to be renewed: and let all that take part with any that work Iniquity, know, that they do but defile their own Souls thereby, and do but rend themselves from that Body which they cannot prosper out of. And therefore, dear Friends, beware of joyning with that in your selves or in others, which the Power goeth against, let the Pretences be what they will; for that which doth Evil, will always be aptest to sow evil Complaining of others; and such as are in the unsatisfied Murmurings against Judgment passed upon them, are much to be feared; for they thereby render themselves to be the more guilty, and yet the further from Repentance. But, dear Friends, watch unto that which gives you a living feeling of the living Body, which is the Church, that in all things you may demean your selves as true Members of it, serving one another in Love, and submitting your selves one unto another for the Lord's sake: That in all  
plainness



Plainness and Singleness, as becometh the Truth, you may seek to preserve the Unity which the Enemy of Truth and Peace doth envy; so shall ye continue to strengthen one anothers hands in every good work, and this shall tend to the weakening of the hands of your Enemies, who seek to divide you, that they might rule over you. Many other Designs doth the wicked one try, daily to break and divide, more than can now be named or here inserted; but they are all out of the Light, and if you be in it, you will see them, and that will preserve you; for its one, and did make us one, and will keep us to be of one heart and mind to the end, if we abide in it.

3. The third good affect which Truth did work in the beginning in them who did truly receive it, was *Zeal & Faithfulness* to God in the bearing Testimony to what was manifest, though through great Sufferings; in which, as Friends abide in the Root, they do daily encrease in Power, to fulfill the same Testimony: for the Mercy of the Lord doth engage them; and his answer of Peace in the midst of their Tryals, doth Arm them and Encourage them, and they do hold out to the End; and for such the Lord hath always made a way, better than they could have made for themselves. Yet the Enemy hath in this Matter also been very busie, and hath prevailed with some under divers Considerations, or rather Consultations, which he hath propounded unto them. But, Oh Friends, be ye all watchful, and take heed lest any of the Testimonies of Truth be laid waste; for that which leads to be weary of bearing Witness to the Truth, and to lay it Waste, the same will lay thee Waste, and bring thee into such a State, as thou wilt want the Truth to bear witness for thee; and though it be hard for Flesh and Blood (which hath no Kingdom but here) to fall into the hands of Unreasonable Men, yet it is a more fearfull Thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God; and therefore, let all Lukewarm ones, who are neither hot nor cold, be now awakened, and all that have gone backwards be warned to return to their First-Love, else the Lord will come against them, and the Day hasteneth it will divide such their Portion among Hypocrites, except they Repent.

But

But to touch at some of the Reasons or Arguments, which he that abode not in the Truth himself, useth to draw others into this kind of Treacherous Backsliding.

*First*, He appears to some to periwade them, That their former Testimony was born more from an imitation of others, than from a work of the Power of God in themselves; and that now, they not finding the Thing required of them, they may leave off their Testimonies, or may do such things as they have denyed formerly; this Snare doth the Enemy make use of in these Days. But mark who it is that he hath caught with it; none but such who sometimes were Low in their Minds, and dare not grieve the Spirit of God in themselves, nor others, but for the Truths-sake could give up all things rather than their Testimony; but in time growing careless, and loose in waiting, lost that subject state, and grew high and exalted in their Minds, above the Cross that should have crucified the betraying Wisdom; and so having lost the true exercise of the Power, and the feeling of the Excellency and Worth of the Truth, they knew not the Requirings of the Lord; and the earthly Mind got up, that placed a greater esteem upon Earthly Things, than upon Things that are Eternal; and so things that once thou offeredst up to God, thou takest again into thy own hand, and so robbest the Lord, and growest careful about outward things, as other *Gentiles* are; and to cover thy shame therein, the Enemy then tempts thee to bely the Power that once wrote in thy Heart, and made thee afraid to act against the Light, or to deny the Testimony for God in such things as was manifest, and then saist, thou didst it by imitation; but thou shalt know thy Covering is too narrow in the day that hasteth upon thee.

Another Temptation that the Enemy presenteth, is, That though thou art convinced what to do, or what thou shouldst deny, yet the Tryals are so hard and so many, and Persecutors wax worse and worse, so that thou shalt not hold out to the end; and where he can get entrance with this Bait, he presently causeth an Evil Heart of Unbelief and Doubting to arise, which takes away even the strength which the Lord did give, and so feebleness doth enter the Mind, and a Spirit of Bondage leads thee

thee to fear again; and then comes the Dispute in thy Heart whether thou shalt stand with the Power of God, in the Obedience, or whether thou shalt fall under that Power that ariseth against God, and his Truth and People; and in this Combate thou hast a subtil Enemy, using many devices to betray thee; and a part in thy self, not yet mortified, that is ready to say, *Pity thy Self, Pity thy Wife, Pity thy Children, and Pity thy Relations*; which it may be sometimes, are all as so many Instruments of Satan to seduce thee, and lead thee into Darkness, that thou mayst not see so great necessity in thy bearing up thy Testimony as indeed there is, nor so great a danger in the contrary as indeed there is.

Oh Friends, at such a time as this, where is there any help but in the Lord? Where canst thou find a Saviour, but in that Light which gives to distinguish of the several Voices? Now it is good for thee to remember, that *if thou walk after the Flesh, thou must and shalt surely Dye, and Wither*. In such a time flee, flee to the Lord, wait in his Dread to feel thy strength but renewed at the present, and take no care for strength next Moneth, next Year, or next Tryal; for *God is God, and changeth not, and will be the same to thee in Seven Tryals as in Six, if thou believe and wait on him in Uprightness*; and therefore fear not man, but trust in the Lord all ye that have known and felt his Power, and let not in the Enemy of your souls by the Door of *Carnal Reasoning*, but keep that shut; and rather consider, how the Enemy makes thee as a rejoycing among his own Children, and strengthens that hope in them of their overcoming all others, as well as thee; which hope is Curst, and shall be Confounded: And consider, that if thou lettest fall thy Testimony, which thou hast once born for the Lord, thou makest the Heart of the Righteous sad, and makest their Travail through that Testimony the harder for them, by reason of thy encouraging their Adversaries by the hope aforesaid. And whatever thou dost, *they must go thorow to the End, who will inherit the Crown of Immortality*.

And again consider, It may be that thy backsliding, or cowardly drawing away the Shoulder, may prove a Discourage-

ment to others, and they may stumble in thy stumbling, and fall with thee, and never be able to rise, and so thou bring their Blood also upon thee. Oh, remember also that Servant of the Lord, who could say, *Psal. 119. 157. My Persecutors are increased, but my Heart doth not decline by Testimonies.* That was a noble Spirit becoming the Souldiers of Christ; yea, though persecuted by Princes, as he saith, *Verf. 161.*

*Dear Friends,* Let your Minds be stirred up to be zealous for the Lord, in this the great day of Controversie with Darkness and its Power. Who hath God to bear Witness to his Name but you? Among whom hath he made it known as among you? Who have given up themselves to the Lord as you have done? Well, *Blessed are they that keep Covenant with the Lord, for they shall see his Glory.*

One more subtil Snare of the Enemy in this matter is in my Heart to mention, that is this, *viz.* To perswade thee for once, sometimes to do that which the Light hath made manifest, with a purpose afterward to be more Faithful. Oh Friends, In the Name and Fear of the Lord, I exhort and warn you all to take heed of this, for this will prove but a False Confidence, thou wilt find this kind of going out of the Guidance of Truth, to be a dear Out-going to thee; for if ever thou dost return, it will be very hardly, and with bitter Anguish of Soul. Oh! do not tempt the Lord on this wise, lest it doth prove impossible upon thy sinning willingly to renew or restore thee again by Repentance; thou wilt have thy Portage, but wilt lose the Blessing, though thou may seek it with Tears; for while thou wentest out, behold, thy way became hedged up, and the Thorny Nature gat up in thee, and so thou art debarred and fenced out from enjoying thy former state; Sin being entered, Death soon follows. Oh remember *Sampson*, who when he had disclosed the Token of a *Nazarite*, in which state he stood in Covenant with God; yet thought to have shaken himself, and to have gone forth in his Strength, as at other times, but was mistaken, *Judg. 16. 20. for the Lord was departed from him, though he knew it not.* And so, though thou hast known the Lord's Presence and Power in thy Vessel, yet take heed of letting in that Treacherous Spirit, to lead thee to Unfaithfulness, and



and to betray the least of his Trusts and Testimonies committed to thee, though it be but for once, for thereby thou wilt render thy self unworthy to be found a Witness of his Power another time; for the Lord will leave that Vessel, and oftendoth, and chuseth other Vessels to manifest himself in, that will be more True and Faithful.

So, dear Friends, in true and tender Love I have laid these things before you, that ye might all be stirred up and provoked to Love, and to good Works, that ye might abound in the Grace committed to you; and none of you who have known the Truth, might be entangled with the Wiles of your subtil Enemy, and that you that have begun well, might not lose the things that ye have wrought, but might persevere in well doing till ye have finished your course in peace. And Friends, this is the joy and delight of those that labour among you in the Lord, and hereby is our Hand strengthened, and our Hearts refreshed, when we do find ye such as we desire ye should be, even stedfast in the Truth; and then also do you find us to you-ward, such as we desire we should be, even a refreshing in the fellowship of Life unto you, and our God comforts us together, in the mutual joy and comfort of his holy Spirit, working in us and you.

And Friends, I am the more drawn forth at this time to visit you with an Epistle, because the Lord hath given me some sight of his great and dreadful Day, and Workings in it, which is at hand, and greatly hastens, of which I have something to say unto you, that ye may be prepared to stand in his Day, and may behold his wondrous Working among his Enemies, and have fellowship with his Power therein, and may not be dismayed nor driven away in the Tempest, which will be great.

And as concerning those succeeding Times, the Spirit of the Lord hath signified, that they will be Times of Horror and Amazement, to all that have, and yet do reject his Counsel: for as the dayes of his Forbearance, Warning and Inviting, hath been long, so shall his appearance, amongst those that have withstood him, be Fierce and Terrible; even so terrible, as  
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who shall abide his coming? for the Lord will work both secretly and openly, and his Arm shall be manifest to his Children in both.

Secretly he shall raise up a continual fretting anguish amongst his Enemies, one against another, so that being vexed and tormented inwardly, they shall seek to make each other miserable, and delight therein for a little season; and then the Prevailer must be prevailed over, and the digger of the pit must fall therein; and the confidence that men have had one in another shall fail, and they will beguile and betray one another, both by counsel and strength; and as they have banded themselves to break you, whom God hath gathered, so shall they band themselves against one another, to break, to upon, and destroy one another; and throw the multitude of their Treacheries, all credit or belief, upon the account of their solemn engagement, shall fail; so that few men shall count themselves, or what is theirs, safe in the hand of his Friend, who hath not chosen his safety and friendship in the pure Light of the unchangeable Truth of God; and all the secret Counsels of the Ungodly shall be brought to nought, sometimes by the means of some of themselves, and sometimes by impossibilities lying in their way, which shall make their Hearts full of ever accomplishing what they have determined; and in this state shall men fret themselves for a season, and shall not be able to see the Hand that turns against them, but shall turn to fight against one thing, and another, and a third thing, and shall stagger, and reel in Counsel and Judgment, as drunken men that know not where to find the way to rest; and when they do yet stir themselves up against the holy People, and against the holy Covenant of Light, and them that walk in it, they shall but the more be confounded; for they shall be helped with a little help, which all the Ungodly shall not hinder them of, to wit, the secret Arm of the Lord, maintaining their Cause, and raising up a Witness in the very Hearts of their Adversaries to plead their Innocency, and this shall make them yet the more to vex themselves, and to go thorow hard-bested; for when they shall look upward to their Religion, to their Power, Policy, or Preferments,

serments, or Friendships, or whatsoever else they had trusted in, and relied upon, they shall have cause to curse it; and when they look downwards to the Effects produced by all those things, behold, then trouble, and horror, and vexation takes hold on them, and drives them to Darknets; and having no help but what is Earthly, and being out of the knowledge of the mighty overturning Power of the Lord God Almighty, they shall despair and wear out their dayes with Anguish; and besides all this, the terrible hand of the Lord is, and shall be openly manifested against this ungodly Generation, by bringing grievous and terrible Judgments and Plagues upon them, tumbling down all things in which they Pride and Glory stood, and overturning, overturning, even the Foundations of their strength; yea, the Lord will lay waste the Mountain of the Ungodly, and the strength of the fenced City shall fail, and when men shall say, *We will take refuge in them*, they shall become but a Snare, and there shall the Sword devour: And when they shall say, *We will go into the Field, and put trust in the Number and Courage of our Soldiers*, they shall both be taken away; and this Evil also will come of the Lord, and his Hand will be stretched out still, and shall bring Confusion upon Confusion, Ruine upon Ruine, and War upon War; and the Hearts of men shall be stirred in them, and the Nations shall be as Waters, into which a Tempest, a swift Whirlwind is entred, and even as Waves swell up to the dissolution one of another, and breaking one of another, so shall the swellings of People be: And because of the hardship and sorrow of those dayes, many shall seek and desire Death rather than Life.

Ah! my Heart relents and is moved within me in the sense of these things, and much more then I can Write or Declare, which the Lord will do in the Earth, and will also make haste to accomplish among the Sons of Men, that they may know and confess, *That the Most High doth Rule in the Kingdoms of Men, and pulleth down and setteth up according to his own Will: And this, shall men do before seven times pass over them, and shall be content to give their Glory unto him that sits in Heaven.*

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But, Oh Friends, while all these things are working, and being to pass, repose ye your selves in the Munition of that Rock that all these shakings shall not move, even in the knowledge and feeling of the eternal Power of God, keeping you subjectly given up to his Heavenly Will, and feel it daily to kill and mortifie that which remains in any of you, which is of this World; for the worldly part in any, is the changeable part, and that is up and down, full and empty, joyful and sorrowful, as things go well or ill in the World: For as the Truth is but one, and many are made partakers of its Spirit; so the World is but one, and many are partakers of the Spirit of it; and so many as do partake of it, so many will be straitned and perplexed with it; but they who are single to the Truth, waiting daily to feel the Life and Virtue of it in their Hearts, these shall rejoyce in the midst of Adversity; these shall not have their Hearts moved with fear, nor tossed with anguish because of evil Tyings, *Isa. 112. 7, 8.* Because that which fixeth them remains with them: These shall know their entrance with the Bridegroom, and so be kept from sorrow, though his coming be with a noise; and when a mid-night is come upon man's Glory, yet they being ready and prepared, it will be well with them, and having a true sence of the Power working in themselves, they cannot but have Unity and Fellowship of it in the Earth, and will not at all murmur against what is, nor wish nor will what is not to be; these will be at rest till the Indignation passeth over, and these having no Design to carry on, nor no Party to promote in the Earth, cannot possibly be defeated nor disappointed in their undertakings.

And when you see Division, and Parties, and Rendings in the Bowels of Nations, and Rumours and Tempest in the Minds of People, then take heed of being moved to this Party or to that Party, or giving your strength to this or that, or counselling this way or that way; but stand single to the Truth of God, in which neither War, Rent nor Division is; and take heed of that part in any of you, which trusts and relies upon any sort of the Men of this World, in the Day of their Prosperity; for the same party will bring you to suffer with them in the time of their Adversity, which

which will not be long after; for stability in that Ground there will be none; but when they shall say, *Come joyn with us in this or that*, remember you are joynd to the Lord by his pure Spirit, to walk with him in Peace and in Righteousness, and you feeling this, this gathers out of all Bussings, and Noises, and Parties, and Tumults, and leads you to exalt the Standard of Truth and Righteousness, in an innocent Conversation, to the who will flow unto that; and this shall be a Refuge for many of the Weary, Tossed and Afflicted Ones in those dayes, and a Shelter for many while Day is not yet over.

So dearly beloved Friends and Brethren, who have believed and known the blessed Appearance of the Truth, let not your Hearts be troubled at none of these things; oh! let not the things that are at present, nor things that are yet to come, move you from steadfastness, but rather double your Diligence, Zeal and Faithfulness to the Cause of God: for they that know the Work wrought in themselves, they shall rest in the Day of Trouble, *Yea, though the Fig-tree fail, and the Vine brings not forth, and the Labour of the Olive-reeceaseth, and the Fields yield no Meat, and Sheep be cut off from the Fold, and there be no Bullock in the Stall, yet then mayest thou rejoyce in the Lord, and sing Praises to the God of thy Salvation.* Hab. 3. 16, 17.

And now near these days are to this poor Nation, few know; and therefore the Cry of the Lord is very loud unto its Inhabitants, through his Servants and Messengers, that they would prize their time while they have it, lest they be overturned, wasted and laid desolate before they are aware; and before Destruction come upon them, and there be no remedy, as it hath already done upon many.

Oh LONDON, LONDON! That thou and thy Rulers would have considered, and hearkened and heard, in the Day of thy Warnings and Invitations, and not have persisted in thy Rebellion, till the Lord was moved against thee, to cut off the Thousand and Multitudes from thy Streets, and the pressing throngings of People from thy Gates, & then to destroy and ruin



thy Streets also, and lay desolate thy Gates, when thou thoughtest to have replenished them again.

And, Oh ! saith my Soul, that thy Inhabitants would yet be warned, and perswaded to Repent and Turn to the Lord, by putting away every one the Evil that is in their Hearts, against the Truth in your selves, and against those that walk in it, before a greater D solation and Destruction overtake you.

Oh ! what shall I say to prevail with *London*, and with its Inhabitants ! The Lord hath Called aloud, he hath Roared out of *Zion* unto them, but many of them have not hearkened at all, nor considered at all.

Well, Oh my Friends ! (and thou, oh my Soul ! ) return to your Rest, dwell in the Pavillion of the House of your God, and my God, and shelter your selves under the shadow of his Wings, where ye shall be Witnesses of his Doings, and see his **STRANGE ACT** brought to pass, and shall not be hurt therewith, nor disinayed.

Oh my Friends ! in the Bowels of dear and tender Love have I signified these things unto you, that ye might stand armed with the whole Armour of God, Cloathed in Righteousness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace ; and freely given up in all things to the disposing of the Lord, who will deliver us, not by Might, nor by Sword, nor Spear. but by his own eternal invisible Arm, will he yet save us and deliver us, and get himself a Name by preserving of us : and we shall yet live to praise him who is worthy of Glory, of Honour and Renown, from the rising of the Sun to the setting of the same, now and forever, *Amen, Amen*, saith my Soul.

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## A Postscript.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

**I** Have something farther in my heart to communicate unto you, in dear and tender Love, and in desire of your preservation out of the Snares of your Adversary; And that is, To exhort you all to dwell in the pure Judgment of the Truth, which is a Defence upon your Glory; and let none bereave you of this under any pretence whatsoever; but as you come to a true feeling of the Life in your selves, to which alone the certain Judgment appertaineth, so let this Life have freedom, and stop it not from judging all that which is at enmity with the Life, and tends to the hurting the true Plant of God; for I have seen a Harm hath come to many who have parted with their Judgment, and so have become unarmed, and the Enemy hath prevailed upon them. (under a pretended Tenderneſs) to permit or suffer such things as were hurtful to themselves or others; and though the Lord hath given them Judgment and Discerning in the Matter, yet were bereaved of that Gift, and so by little and little became beguiled.

Oh dear Friends! consider these dayes are perilous times, and it is needful for every one to watch in that same Eternal Light to which you were first turned; that by its Righteous Judgment ye may be preserved from every thing in your selves that appears contrary to that precious Life of which you have tasted: And when you have so done, then to take heed, that the Enemy do not do that by an Instrument which (through your watchfulness in the Light he could not do without; and all beware of that affected Tenderneſs

*derneſſ, that cryes out, Be tender to all, and pray for all, and mind the Good in all, and love all, and judge none, but leave Judgment to God, &c. I ſay, Heed not the plausible words of that Spirit, which being guilty, to ſave its own Head from a ſtroke, would bereave you of your Judgment, which God hath given you; and is indeed truly his Judgment, and is to be adminiſtred in his Wiſdom and Power, for the cleaſing and keeping clean his Sanctuary; for ſuch as have no Judgment in their goings are they that know not the true way of Peace, but make them crooked Paths, he that goeth in them ſhall not know Peace, Iſa. 59. 8.*

*But ſome may ſay, Was not Chriſt Meek and Lowly? and ought not all to be like unto him?*

*'Tis true, my Friends; but there is a difference between the Seed's Suffering and its Reſurrexion, and there are times for them both: and when it doth pleaſe God to permit the Hour and Power of Darkneſs in the open Perſecutors, to exalt it ſelf againſt his Seed and People, by Perſecution, or ſuch like; they are led by his Spirit to appear in Meekneſs and Quietneſs, as a Sheep before the Shearer. But what is this to ſuffering bad and perverſe Spirits, that appear under pretence of the Truth and yet are out of the Truth, and Enemies to its proſperity, ſtriving to exalt and ſet up another thing inſtead of the Truth? Such as theſe the Lord doth not require you to uſe only Patience and Meekneſs towards; but if that will not reclaim them they muſt know the Judgment of the Truth and you in it muſt ſtand over them; for in this caſe the Day of the Exaltation of Chriſt is come, and God is crowning Truth with Dominion over every falſe Spirit, and corrupts Practice thereof.*

*And therefore, Dear Friends, eye the Lord in his goings,*

ings forth, and as you feel his Life in you to witness against any evil and corrupt thing or practise, use Plainness, and keep Sincerity, and turn not Judgment backwards; for that which is unwilling to be judged, and cries out, Judge none, leave all to God, &c. the same will take upon it both to judge and rule, but not in the Wisdom of God; and those that cry out so much for Tenderness, & against Truth's Judgment, the same are most dangerous to be drawn out from the patient suffering in the Spirit of Christ Jesus, when they ought to appear in the most Meekness, and to appear rough & wrathful in the striving & fighting Nature, and are most apt to be tempted into a Spirit of Revenge, as hath been seen by sad Experience; for they that lose the exercise of that by which all should keep Dominion over Deceit, they lose that strength by which they should be enabled to suffer all things for the sake of Christ Jesus.

So, Dear Friends, in that which keeps out the Defiler and the Betrayer, all wait upon the Lord, that you may have your Armour on, and be fortified with the Strength, with the Might, and with the Judgments of God, and keep that under in every place which under Pretence of Tenderness and Forbearance would make void the Testimony of Truth, or make the Offence of the Cross to cease in any thing where-in you have been instructed from the beginning, that the Lord may behold and see Judgment established, and be pleased, Isa. 59. The Lord looked, and there was no Judgment, and it displeased him; For thereby Deceit got up, which with it is to be kept down.

So the Lord God of Power and Wisdom preserve you faithful, and fitted for every good Word & Work; the Strong to watch over the Weak, in singleness; and the Weak to be subject to the Strong in the Lord, that so the pure Plant of Righteousness and Truth may grow in and among you all, to his Praise that hath called you: To whom be Glory and Honour forever, Amen.

S. C.

